

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

CHAD COLON

Plaintiff

v.

MARTIN O'MALLEY,
 Commissioner of
 Social Security,

Defendant

Case No.: 3:24-cv-00485-CSD

Order

Re: ECF Nos. 1, 1-1

Before the court is Plaintiff's application to proceed in forma pauperis (ECF No. 1) and pro se complaint (ECF No. 1-1).

I. APPLICATION FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS

A person may be granted permission to proceed in forma pauperis (IFP) if the person "submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets such [person] possesses [and] that the person is unable to pay such fees or give security therefor. Such affidavit shall state the nature of the action, defense or appeal and affiant's belief that the person is entitled to redress." 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1); *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1129 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc) (stating that 28 U.S.C. § 1915 applies to all actions filed IFP, not just prisoner actions).

In addition, the Local Rules of Practice for the District of Nevada provide: "Any person who is unable to prepay the fees in a civil case may apply to the court for authority to proceed [IFP]. The application must be made on the form provided by the court and must include a financial affidavit disclosing the applicant's income, assets, expenses, and liabilities." LSR 1-1.

"[T]he supporting affidavits [must] state the facts as to [the] affiant's poverty with some particularity, definiteness and certainty." *U.S. v. McQuade*, 647 F.2d 938, 940 (9th Cir. 1981)

(quoting *Jefferson v. United States*, 277 F.2d 723, 725 (9th Cir. 1960)). A litigant need not “be absolutely destitute to enjoy the benefits of the statute.” *Adkins v. E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, 335 U.S. 331, 339 (1948).

A review of the application to proceed IFP reveals Plaintiff cannot pay the filing fee; therefore, the application is granted.

II. SCREENING

“[T]he court shall dismiss the case at any time if the court determines that-- (A) the allegation of poverty is untrue; or (B) the action or appeal-- (i) is frivolous or malicious; (ii) fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or (iii) seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(A), (B)(i)-(iii).

Dismissal of a complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted is provided for in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) tracks that language. As such, when reviewing the adequacy of a complaint under this statute, the court applies the same standard as is applied under Rule 12(b)(6). *See e.g. Watison v. Carter*, 668 F.3d 1108, 1112 (9th Cir. 2012) (“The standard for determining whether a plaintiff has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) is the same as the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) standard for failure to state a claim.”). Review under Rule 12(b)(6) is essentially a ruling on a question of law. *See Chappel v. Lab. Corp. of America*, 232 F.3d 719, 723 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

The court must accept as true the allegations, construe the pleadings in the light most favorable to the plaintiff, and resolve all doubts in the plaintiff’s favor. *Jenkins v. McKeithen*, 395 U.S. 411, 421 (1969) (citations omitted). Allegations in pro se complaints are “held to less

1 stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers[.]” *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9
2 (1980) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

3 A complaint must contain more than a “formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of
4 action,” it must contain factual allegations sufficient to “raise a right to relief above the
5 speculative level.” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). “The pleading
6 must contain something more ... than ... a statement of facts that merely creates a suspicion [of]
7 a legally cognizable right of action.” *Id.* (citation and quotation marks omitted). At a minimum, a
8 plaintiff should include “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Id.* at
9 570; *see also Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009).

10 A dismissal should not be without leave to amend unless it is clear from the face of the
11 complaint that the action is frivolous and could not be amended to state a federal claim, or the
12 district court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over the action. *See Cato v. United States*, 70 F.3d
13 1103, 1106 (9th Cir. 1995); *O’Loughlin v. Doe*, 920 F.2d 614, 616 (9th Cir. 1990).

14 Plaintiff’s complaint names the Commissioner of Social Security and alleges that the
15 Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) made harmful legal errors on his disability case and as a result
16 he is unable to receive his disability benefits. He asks for the decision to be reviewed and
17 overturned. (ECF No. 1-1.)

18 Federal courts have sole jurisdiction to conduct judicial review of the Social Security
19 Administration’s determination in this regard. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Plaintiff does not allege
20 that he appealed the ALJ’s decision to the Social Security Appeals Council and received a
21 decision that would be a final appealable decision of the Commissioner. Nor does he allege how
22 the ALJ erred in denying him disability benefits. Therefore, Plaintiff’s complaint will be filed
23

1 and served on the Commissioner, but it will be dismissed with leave to amend so Plaintiff can
2 attempt to correct these deficiencies.

3 **III. CONCLUSION**

4 (1) Plaintiff's application to proceed IFP (ECF No. 1) is **GRANTED**. Plaintiff is
5 permitted to maintain this action without the necessity of prepayment of fees or costs
6 or the giving of security therefor.

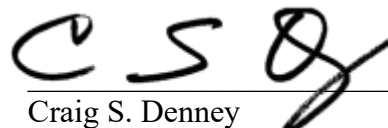
7 (2) The Clerk shall **FILE** the complaint (ECF No. 1-1).

8 (3) The complaint shall be served on the Commissioner in accordance with Rule 3 of the
9 Supplemental Rules for Social Security Actions under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

10 (4) The Complaint is **DISMISSED WITH LEAVE TO AMEND**. Plaintiff has **30 days**
11 from the date of this Order to file an amended complaint that corrects the deficiencies
12 noted in this Order with respect to his original complaint. He shall make sure the
13 amended complaint is clearly titled as an amended complaint. If Plaintiff fails to
14 timely file an amended complaint, this action may be dismissed.

15 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

16 Dated: November 15, 2024

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18 Craig S. Denney
19 United States Magistrate Judge
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